



NEWS RELEASE

08-156

Today's Date: Tuesday, December 09, 2008

District: 1

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS DISTRICT 1 EMPLOYEES RECEIVE MEDAL OF VALOR

Eureka – Caltrans announced today that two District 1 employees received the Medal of Valor from Governor Schwarzenegger today. The Governor's Medal of Valor, the highest honor the state bestows upon its employees, is awarded to individuals who have performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the call of duty to save the life of another person.

When District 1 Local Assistance employees Brandon Larsen and Brett Gronemeyer came upon an over-the-bank collision on Route 1 roughly 11 miles south of the junction of Routes 1 and 101 in August 2008, their quick thinking and selfless action helped rescue an injured motorcyclist.

Catherine Talbot was riding her motorcycle southbound along Route 1 when she lost control on a curve, nearly sideswiped a Jeep, and continued over the edge of the road and down the steep hillside. She slid to a stop 100 feet down the hill, but her motorcycle continued another 200 feet to the bottom. She had injuries to her left leg. The driver of the Jeep stopped and tied two ropes to the bumper of his vehicle to assist in accessing Ms. Talbot. He, and another female passerby, climbed down the hillside to render aid.

Moments later, Brandon and Brett came across the scene and stopped to provide assistance. Brandon climbed down the hillside to help Ms. Talbot. Due to her leg injuries, which included a severe laceration to her heel and possible broken bones, Brandon suggested they stabilize her and wait there for the ambulance, but she insisted she wanted to get off the side of the hill. Brandon tied one of the ropes to Ms. Talbot, and while he pulled her up the hill, the driver of the Jeep helped guide her leg to prevent further injury and pain. When they arrived at the roadway, another passerby offered a medical kit. Brandon then assisted in bandaging Ms. Talbot's heel and stopping the bleeding.

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Meanwhile, Brett provided traffic control to help insure no additional collisions would occur at the scene since the narrow road was partially blocked by those rendering assistance. Brett also attempted to call 911, but he discovered there was no cell coverage. He stopped two motorists that passed by, one traveling in each direction, and asked them to call 911 as soon as they could get cell coverage.

With Ms. Talbot stabilized, Brandon then assisted Brett with traffic control until the ambulance arrived more than 30 minutes after they first arrived on the scene.

Said Ms. Talbot, "I know these guys were tired from a long day at work, but they stayed to help me and made sure I was OK, even after the ambulance took me away. [They] went above and beyond to assist me and words can not express my gratitude for their help that day."

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Note to media: For an accompanying photo, please contact Julie East at julie.east@dot.ca.gov or (707) 441-3998.